



MINUTES – MEC RETREAT
Saturday, August 8, 2015, at 8:00 a.m.
University of Arizona Student Union, 1303 E. University Blvd.,
Tucson, Arizona.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bill Ardern, Dennis Barger, Diego Martinez Barrera, James Cook, Jen Darland, Richard Elias, George Favela, Jennifer Flores, Steven Freeman, Javier Herrera, Teri Laguna, Paul Lovelis, Amber Mathewson, Vicky Mullins, Dr. Daisy Rodriguez Pitel, Jo Riester, Jennifer Sprung, Dr. Kasey Urquidez, Dr. June Webb-Vignery, Patricia Wiedhopf, Maggie Zheng.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Dr. Louis Albert, Dr. Linda Arzoumanian, Dr. Mary Jan Bancroft, Dr. Kent Barrabee, Deborah Embry, Molly Gilbert, Regina Romero, Dr. Alan Storm.

NON-COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Karla Avalos Soto, Anakarina Rodriguez, Dr. John Pedicone, Dana Wolfe Niamark, Jason Freed, Dr. Eugenia Favela, Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle, Dr. Robert Breault, Guillermo Figueroa, Rafael Meza, Matt Kopec, Edward Nossem, David Rodriguez, Arlene Benavidez, David Ojeda, Kyle Hetherington; Student School District Representatives: Karmae Douglass – Andrada High School, Vail USD; Brennen Feder - Catalina Foothills HS/USD; Aaditee Kudnmoti - Catalina Foothills HS/USD; Alexis Potter– Catalina Magnet High School, TUSD; Patrick Derrig – Flowing Wells HS/USD; Hannah Laulusa – Marana High School, Marana USD; Bailey Pedersen - Mountain View High School, Marana USD; Abrigail Martinez - Sunnyside High School, Sunnyside USD.

1.0 GREETINGS – DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ
The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

1.1 CALL TO ORDER – DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ

1.2 ROLL CALL – DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ

Roll call was conducted; a quorum was established.

1.3 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was recited by all attendees.

2.0 WELCOMING REMARKS

DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

HON. RICHARD ELÍAS, PIMA COUNTY SUPERVISOR RICHARD

KARLA AVALOS SOTO, REPRESENTING MAYOR JONATHAN ROTHSCHILD

ANAKARINA RODRIGUEZ, REPRESENTING WARD 1 COUNCIL MEMBER
REGINA ROMERO

Dr. Urquidez welcomed the Commissioners, Panelists, YAC/TTC members, student school superintendent representatives, and other attendees to the U of A Student Union.

Pima County Supervisor Richard Elías expressed his pleasure at being in attendance at the Retreat. Mr. Elías congratulated the MEC on its successes with the Crystal Apple Awards Luncheon and the Regional College Access Center in the past year. He discussed the impact of the state budget cuts, not only to education but also to Pima County state funding, and its detrimental impacts. He said that the state is sending the wrong message to the world through its actions, and that funding education, including higher education, is of critical importance to the well-being of the state and its residents. This is a non-partisan issue and we need to elevate the discussion; local government needs to make a difference, and we are on a pathway to doing it. Thanks to the MEC and especially June for the leadership she provides.

Karla Avalos Soto from the Mayor's Office thanked the MEC and read a statement from Mayor Rothschild. His statement noted that the theme of the Retreat is Economic Development, and related his office's emphasis on educational programs and initiatives, as well as the importance of community engagement regarding educational issues. The Mayor looks forward to working with the MEC, in particular on the Community Schools Initiative, where 32 AmeriCorps service members will be placed at 8 schools across 3 districts and social service partner agencies to build out community schools. Community Schools are a great resource to not only the students, but their families and surrounding neighborhoods.

Anakarina Rodriguez from the Ward 1 office also attended, representing Ward 1 Council Member Regina Romero.

3.0 INTRODUCTIONS – PAT WIEDHOPE

Due to time constraints and the large number of attendees, all were asked to state their name, their title, and what it is that brought them to the MEC Retreat.

4.0 PANEL DISCUSSION: EDUCATION FUNDING

MODERATOR:

JEN DARLAND, MEC COMMISSIONER

PANELISTS:

HONORABLE RICHARD ELIAS, PIMA CO. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

JASON FREED, PRESIDENT, TUCSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

(REPRESENTING THE ARIZONA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION)

DANA WOLFE NAIMARK, PRESIDENT & CEO, CHILDREN'S ACTION ALLIANCE

DR. JOHN PEDICONE, SOUTHERN ARIZONA LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

PLEASE NOTE: The following is a summary of the Panel Discussion; the complete transcript is available from the MEC office.

Pima County Supervisor Richard Elías related that funding mechanisms this year really hurt the County; education costs have been shifted over onto Pima County to pay. Pima County is looking at paying an extra \$18 million because of costs that were shifted over to Pima County

by the Legislature, and about \$6 ½ million regarding education and TUSD. We have people in Ajo paying for TUSD's costs, which is an inequitable situation. Thus, Pima County is making an issue of this with the Legislature in the courts and entering into more litigation about it, which should be seen not as being against education, but rather, supporting education. Regarding collaborating with the MEC in the issue, the County funding of the MEC and RCAC provides funding leverage opportunities from other sources. Government can collaborate in many ways – with our school districts, with people who are involved in education on all different kinds of levels, including the RCAC, the MEC, teachers associations, and employee representatives, because it's all about the services that the County provides.

Dr. John Pedicone, representing the Southern Arizona Leadership Council, brought the perspective of the business community. The SALC's leadership includes both conservative and liberal members, recognizing the importance of balanced viewpoints. The business community is extremely important because their voice is traditionally the one that is heard in the Legislature. Some of those things are changing with the current Legislature and current Governor, and the business community is finding that today there is a great deal of frustration on the part of businesses because even their voice is not heard. There's an ideology that's driving the kind of policy that's taking place in Arizona that comes from a very, very different place than it's come from before, and it's a different environment that we're in right now. Don't think that taking trust funds is a long term solution. We've all got to be very careful about what's happening with that, and I think that Jason (Freed) may have some comments about that as well. It's a temporary solution to a bump in the road. So, we've got to be building capacity by all of us being on the same page with what we do, and then marshalling the forces to be sure that we get the Legislature's attention and we get things done.

Nevertheless, the business perspective is to stay at the table with this Governor and with this Legislature, which puts the business community into a kind of tension-filled environment. Education funding should come from a dedicated source, and it should be predictable, for those entrusted with the job of educating our children. We must do more than talk about education as a priority, we've got to demonstrate it as a value by putting resources behind those words. Looking at a long-term, predictable fund for education, the funding formula should include carefully crafted accountability measures that reward innovation and effectiveness and efficiency, and those rewards should not be framed through a deficit model. They should be above and beyond adequate funding for all schools; competing for scarce resources at the expense of support of the most vulnerable schools does not work. Regulatory relief is essential; today, confusing and conflicting regulations can take the educator's eye off of the ball. We can empower those responsible for delivering quality education in Arizona by removing unnecessary and often punitive regulations.

Additional suggestions include restoration of the JTED and CTE funding; funding secured to ensure that principals are effective leaders in schools that create positive learning environments for highly motivated and capable teachers, who must be treated as the professionals that they are and paid appropriately. A system that can recruit and retain highly effective teachers for all Arizona classrooms is imperative. The SALC is committed to collaborations that will see these to fruition, including collaborating with the MEC and other organizations.

Diane Wolfe Naimark, representing the Children's Action Alliance, presented on the statistical dimension of the impact of decreasing education funding. The most important education funding issue is actually on the other side of the ledger. It's on the revenue side of the ledger, and that's taxes. We can all fight and get education into the top ten or the top two of everyone in power, but we can't succeed at that until we stop the drainage on the revenue side of the ledger.

Arizona has had 25 years of nonstop tax cuts, yet many politicians when they're running for office still say, "We have to lower taxes" – we have lower taxes. We've also been on a tax credit binge, and it's really destroying our schools. We have added 27 individual tax credits, and many of us benefit from those tax credits, and we need to think about that as well; and 21 corporate tax credits since 1990 have been added. Tax credits are growing faster than the rest of our budget, must faster than our state economy, and absolutely faster than our schools budget. They are sucking up our resources and our common energy, yet have no accountability.

The state faces about a billion dollar deficit. Out of that billion dollars, more than a third of it was due to tax cuts that had been passed since the Great Recession began. So \$383 million had been cut from our revenue base since 2009. And if we still had those \$383 million, we could have avoided all of the cuts to K-12 education and many other services. We should be looking at not only restoring the tax base to a sustainable level for education, but actually raising taxes to provide increased services.

Ms. Naimark invited the MEC to look at the Children's Action Alliance as extended staff, whom we can go to for data and backup information, and is excited to be working with the MEC on communication and messaging regarding the issue.

Jason Freed, representing the Arizona Education Association, presented on the schools and teachers' perspective. He stated that there continues to be a notion in Arizona that there isn't the money for education. Combining the proceeds that have been drained from revenue since 2009 (\$383 million) and the Rainy Day Fund, you would have about \$700 million. We could make some pretty huge improvements to schools throughout our state with \$700 million. So the notion that the money's not there is not true. The notion that funding really doesn't matter is also erroneous - the states that are doing the best academically are the states that are spending the most on their students, there is a direct correlation.

There has to be an understanding and a commitment when it comes to education, there has to be this commitment at the earliest of ages – 3 to 5 years of age, to give these students, particularly from socioeconomically disadvantaged households, an advantage that they would not have otherwise, as an investment in their future and ours as well.

The AEA has prided itself on the work that they do with community groups, the partnerships that they have, and their willingness to go and knock on doors and talk to our neighbors and colleagues, to anybody who will listen to us about what's taking place in our classrooms. They suggest that everyone join in that effort, and also to research how our legislators vote regarding education funding.

5.0 BUSINESS MEETING – DR. KASEY URQUIDEZ

5.1 Approval of June 2015 Financial Report

NOTE: We will vote on approval of the July and August 2015 Financial Reports at the September 16th MEC meeting.

June 2015 Financial Report:

ASSETS:

Current Assets:	\$101,078.86
Fixed Assets:	<u>4,915.86</u>
Total Assets:	\$105,950.82

LIABILITIES & EQUITY:

Current Liabilities:	\$21,128.75
Total Equity:	<u>84,882.07</u>
Total L & E:	\$105,950.82

(5.1) Approval of June 2015, Financial Report:

Motion: George Favela

Second: Paul Lovelis

Motion carried 21-0.

5.2 Approval of May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Approval of the May 20, 2015 MEC Meeting Minutes:

Motion: Jennifer Sprung

Second: George Favela

Motion carried 21-0.

5.3 New Appointments

Approval of appointment of Rafael Meza representing Accredited Private Institutions

Motion: Jennifer Sprung

Second: Teri Laguna

Motion carried 21-0.

Approval of Guillermo Figueroa representing Sun Corridor, Inc.

Motion: Javier Herrera

Second: Dr. Daisy Rodriguez Pitel

Motion carried 21-0.

5.4 Nominating Committee

The Slate of 2015-2016 MEC Executive Board Officers was introduced.

Chair – Pat Wiedhopf; Vice-Chair: George Favela; Secretary – Paul Lovelis;

Treasurer – Bill Ardern; Past Chair - Dr. Kasey Urquidez; Appointments –

Deborah Embry.

6.0 STATE OF THE MEC – DR. JUNE WEBB-VIGNERY

Dr. Webb-Vignery thanked the University of Arizona for hosting the Retreat, and presented on the current state of the MEC, including a Power Point presentation containing the roles and expectations for MEC Commissioners; Regional College Access Center data including Student Ambassadors; and 2014-2015 Initiatives and activities including the MEC Resolutions on State Education Funding (K-20 and JTED); MEC Collaborations; Regional College Access Center, Key to Employment Symposium, YAC/TTC including the Teen Town Hall and Student Advocacy Day; and the 25th

Annual Crystal Apple Awards Luncheon. This Power Point presentation is also available from the MEC office.

The video presenting the MEC's 25th Anniversary / History of the MEC and RCAC Student Ambassador program, that was produced by Non Profit News Source and presented at the 25th Annual Crystal Apple Awards Luncheon, was also shown.

7.0 BREAK

8.0 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The attendees broke into three separate sessions for discussion and planning:

- a. Education Funding
MEC Fundraising; MEC Advocacy
- b. Youth Advisory Council/Tucson Teen Congress
2015-2016 Activities; Membership Expansion
- c. Regional College Access Center
Expansion of Student Ambassador Program; Sustainability Planning

9.0 SMALL GROUP REPORTS

9.1 EDUCATION FUNDING:

9.1.1 MEC Fundraising

Identify different ways of fundraising, and background on why we need fundraising for the MEC. The Committee will be meeting further on during the year to continue the discussion and investigate further.

A. Background:

Expenses – Support staff, K2E Coordinator, operating expenses, fees, supplies, K2E and Student Advocacy Day transportation, K2E venue and parking expenses, food, etc.

For the last 2 years we have dedicated Crystal Apple Awards Luncheon revenue to the Regional College Access Center. We need to fund the youth activities to keep the youth involved and moving forward. This is an ongoing concern.

B. YAC/TTC Budget

\$38,000.00, part of which is covered through grants from the City & County

C. TARGET: \$15,000 - \$20,000 – K2E costs \$10,000-\$12,000, some of which was covered by donations from the Thomas R. Brown Family Foundation and Cox Communications (transportation/busses)

D. Crystal Apple Awards Luncheon – Donations for Student Ambassadors from donation envelopes: \$3,800. (A suggestion was made that there be an announcement made, envelopes collected, and an announcement of the amount raised be made, but these things did occur at the event – Student Ambassadors and MEC staff collected the envelopes, and Nancy Montoya made an announcement from the podium). It was also suggested that a dollar amount goal be announced, and if the goal is not met people will usually give more to make the goal. This technique has worked with other organizations, such as the Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona which raised \$20,000 at their event. We should also make a statement acknowledging and in appreciation of the table purchases, and that some of the attendees are guests (that have not paid for their seats), and have

students present on the valuable work that they are doing and the need for funding the program as an emotional appeal. Having a matching donor fund appeal is another option. A web-based donation portal (“Landing Page”) would allow people to donate year-round. Social media such as Face Book should also be utilized to inform about MEC programs (Student Advocacy Day, YAC/TTC, K2E, Teen Town Hall, etc.). Monthly pledges are also effective through credit card. All donations are tax deductible. Donation levels can be titled Apple Seed, Apple, Orchid, etc. with program recognitions and perks.

- E. Appeal Letter - send to potential sponsors and donors and follow up; include credit card option.
- F. Grant Opportunities/Corporate Sponsorships – Wells Fargo; Community Foundation for Southern Arizona (Parent-student engagement, Advocacy funding); WalMart
Two levels: local level for smaller amounts for Student Ambassadors, which we can use the appeal letter for, and national grants. We need to find out what local entities fund education - school foundations, Educational Enrichment Foundation (TUSD teachers), etc. The Sunnyside Foundation deals with students and might be amenable to Student Ambassadors. The funding would fall outside of the 24 Ambassadors for the 8 high schools through the Mayor’s initiative (Vail, Amphitheater). Nancy Montoya has been working with Oro Valley Chamber for funding Amphi USD Student Ambassadors. Other possibilities are Humberto Lopez Foundation and Long Realty Cares Foundation. “Soft touch” outreach, web presence for donations was suggested.
We need to plan thank you letters, sustainable follow-ups, and quarterly updates to donors on MEC activities.
- G. Other Revenue Sources – MEC Commissioners, Arizona Gives. Find a way to list all of our MEC Commissioners as supporters, keeping in mind that many are appointed by various entities subject to various stipulations. Any amount (\$5.00) can be referenced, along with volunteer hours as Commissioners.

9.1.2 Education Advocacy Plan

Education advocacy is an uphill battle in terms of getting state funding; we know that we are at the bottom of the list. At present there is no way for teachers to have a horizontal or a vertical way to advance; we will partner with the Education Panel representatives (SALC, AEA, Children’s Action Alliance, Pima County) to move forward. We also need youth advocacy within the community to speak to voices of authority; we can use online tools in this regard. We need a “multi-breed” committee to address the issue; we will bring the Retreat groups together again.

We recognize that the machine that is backing the Governor is very organized, with a good PR team. Now the idea is that, “If you don’t support our State Land Trust plan, then you don’t support education”, but most people don’t support that plan because it’s not a long-term solution, so we’ve been backed into a corner. The question is how do we get out of that corner and fight for education in a way that unifies people. It can’t come from teachers, school board members, or superintendents because at that point it becomes “self-serving”, as in “Give us more money”. It needs to be the community saying, “Our schools need more money”. It’s an issue of who has ownership of the problem.

People need the resources to have the discussion, and also the right data – what does that data look like and how does it speak to people in different ways so that they feel like they have ownership of the issue, and data is a powerful tool, although we need to properly pull data. Uniting people and groups that support education is important, and we need to identify someone who can be the face of public education that isn't a public educator necessarily, we need advocates such as business leaders. The task is how to articulate the value of public education to the general public. We need to “seed” trust – leverage our relationship with SALC in a non-partisan fashion, and also the Phoenix business community. Emphasize that business success is the product of education, and bring the MEC's message to change the conversation. We should also engage the local Chambers of Commerce; the statewide Chamber is disconnected with local values.

It is important to remember that tax credits are a sensitive issue; Faith-Based organizations need them. Education Empowerment Accounts can be created. We need to take a “30,000 ft. high” view and emphasize the need for sustainable funding for education. The issue of “levels” of funding in the discussion will only serve to bring us up to 25th in the nation.

9.2 YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL/TUCSON TEEN CONGRESS

The YAC/TTC Breakout Session was conducted by MEC Secretary Paul Lovelis and assisted by former YAC/TTC President Matt Kopec. The group consisted of YAC/TTC members and student representatives from Amphitheater (YAC/TTC), Catalina Foothills, Flowing Wells, Marana, Sunnyside, and Tucson Unified School Districts.

After the Introductions, the group was presented a history of the YAC/TTC and its Bylaws. The group was then briefed on upcoming YAC/TTC activities for 2015-2016. Activities for the coming year will include:

- Recruitment of new members (ongoing), using social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), as well as local print media and school announcements. Efforts will be made for the schools to promote membership. A number of the school district student representatives in attendance expressed interest in joining the YAC/TTC and filled out applications; they will assume membership at the September 2, 2015 meeting.
- New officer elections (President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary). Presentations September 2nd; Elections September 16th
- Formation of committees to work on specific activities
- Visits to YAC/TTC meetings from elected officials (Dates TBD)
- Candidates Youth Forum (Date TBD) – a youth-hosted and moderated community forum where youth can ask questions of and comment to candidates for public office, who will present their campaign platforms and ideas that affect youth. Date and venue TBD.
- Youth meetings with business leaders as available
- YAC/TTC presence at and involvement in school board meetings
- Ongoing collaboration with the Pima County Public Library Youth Design Team
- Creation of liaisons for teachers by students; formation of a Student/Teacher Committee; open forums for discussion of student/teacher issues (“Power In Numbers”)

EVENTS:

- Teen Town Hall (Friday, October 23, 2015) – goal of 250 student attendees; get the word out early to fellow students via word-of-mouth, social media, school district on-line postings, and at pep rallies; encourage school principals and administrators to attend; follow-up on invitations. Suggestions for community leader attendees will be solicited and the MEC office will issue the invitations to them. The event will be recorded for reference of issues raised, that will then be taken to the State Legislature on Student Advocacy Day in the Spring of 2016. The aim is to expand the impact of the event.
- Key to Employment for the 21st Century Symposium (Wednesday, February 3, 2016) – YAC/TTC members will suggest exhibitors that will enhance the event and act as hosts
- Student Advocacy Day (Spring 2016) – training by local legislators will be arranged for January 2016. Committees will be formed to formulate talking points. The aim this year is to present more forceful arguments to the legislators, backed up by hard data and personal stories. Committee members will initiate contact with the legislators' offices, to be followed up by the MEC office.
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Youth Leadership Conference & Career Fair (March 2016) – YAC/TTC members will suggest workshop topics and committee members will volunteer at the event.
- Selection of Crystal Apple School Counselor & Youth Honorees – Committee will select from nominations
- Selection of Outstanding Teen Citizens – Committee will select from nominations
- Selection of Goal One: Graduate! Poster Contest Winners – Committee will select from submissions

9.3 REGIONAL COLLEGE ACCESS CENTER

The RCAC Committee discussed two issues: the expansion of the Student Ambassador Program, and a Sustainability Plan for the RCAC.

Student Ambassadors

Funding each Student Ambassador costs \$2,000 for the school year; funding for 2 years costs \$4,000. It was suggested that student ambassadors be recruited as high school Juniors and continue on as Seniors.

Businesses should be approached for funding not only city-wide, but statewide – create campaigns using a one-page summary tool / elevator speech which presents data – the amount of money that has been received in scholarships in previous years, that can be presented to business people to demonstrate the results of the Ambassador program.

We should also approach key business organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce – the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the Humberto S. Lopez Foundation; Mr. Lopez has been donating \$10,000 per month to organizations that are focused on education.

Sustainability Plan

The RCAC model has expanded to other municipalities and continues to grow. Right now the City of Tucson and Pima County have been supporting the RCAC and Student

Ambassador program. We should reach out to the other municipalities, attend their Council meetings and provide data to their elected officials and explain to them, based on the data from the 1-page summary, the importance of the program. These should include our sources of funding and program budget. MEC Commissioners should also be more involved.

We should know what initiatives are coming out of the Tucson Mayor's office, and connect with City & County initiatives.

We should start reaching out to the casinos that are in the County, as they have programs that serve the community.

There are many large companies on town that probably don't know about the program - Raytheon, Davis-Monthan AFB, the various mines, telecommunications, optics industries – they also should be reached out to with information on the importance of this program.

When Dr. Webb-Vignery meets with elected officials and council meetings in other municipalities we should go and show our force as a group – let the public officials know of the program. We should have a listing of their revenue resources, and add ambassador costs to the budget.

The creation of a Foundation/Endowment was suggested, people who are alumni of MEC programs, with a matching funds program that a business could match or double.

It was suggested that the Student Ambassador program be a volunteer position, rather than spending \$2,000 per Ambassador – at the end of their one-year commitment they receive a \$500.00 scholarship. – David shared that every single Student Ambassador has earned a scholarship to college, either partial or full, and that's the greatest benefit of becoming a Student Ambassador. This would aid sustainability because we wouldn't have to struggle every year to find money to fund this program. We need to rethink other ways strategically and systematically so that the program doesn't die.

This Committee will continue to meet and discuss the issues.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

Motion to approve: Jennifer Sprung

Second: George Favela, Teri Laguna

Motion carried 21-0. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.